

## IN THE GALLERIES

## A restored work inspires a multi-sculptural experience

BY MARK JENKINS

Earlier this fall, artist Robert Stackhouse and partner Carol Mickett refurbished “Ghost Dance,” a 1974 sculpture whose ownership passed to George Washington University from the Corcoran Gallery of Art after the Corcoran dissolved. That restoration was one inspiration for “Renewal,” a show at GWU’s Luther W. Brady Art Gallery that places Stackhouse’s creation among works by 23 members of the Washington Sculptors Group.

Perhaps the Stackhouse sculpture also guided jurors Olivia Kohler-Maga and Babette Pendleton’s choice of other pieces for the exhibition. Many echo the form or material of “Ghost Dance,” a partial arc — about 10 feet wide at its base and 5 feet high — constructed of slats of recycled wood. The sculpture’s title refers to a Native American ritual meant to summon spirits of the dead, but also to its curved contour, which hints at whirling motion.

Where “Ghost Dance” is oriented horizontally, several contributors send wood skyward. Mike Shaffer’s tapered tower is a triangular scaffold of reclaimed wooden strips, imposing in height but playfully painted red. George Lorio remakes nature by cleanly splitting in two a simulated tree trunk made of found bark affixed to a plywood armature. Less vertical, but also made primarily of secondhand wood, is a colorful Keith Krueger assemblage that incorporates parts of metal signs. C.L. Bigelow’s intricate “Quiet Orb” resembles a nest, but on close inspection reveals itself as made not of twigs but of tubes, filaments and other bits of stray metal.

Many of the pieces are wall mounted, although they’re rarely content to simply parallel the adjacent surface. Barbara Januszkiewicz contributes an abstractly painted canvas, partly cut and draped in the manner of Sam Gilliam. Chee Keong Kung also ventures beyond painting, rendering his trademark hard-edged dynamic gestures in 3D.



WILLIAM ATKINS, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Robert Stackhouse and Carol Mickett’s refurbished “Ghost Dance,” an inspiration for the “Renewal” exhibit with works by 23 artists.

Jennifer Noda’s ominous clocklike metal device includes two jagged wooden pieces as hands, while Lisa Rosenstein reclaims a more insidious material, hand-knotting a shroud of clear plastic shreds to luminous effect.

Although most of the artworks command the space they occupy, they don’t respond directly to it. One compelling exception is Caroline MacKinnon’s “Pebbles Lost in Time,” an installation of glazed ceramic buttons on the floor in one corner of a gallery. Another, smaller batch of buttons calls to the other side of the room. The two sets aren’t involved in a dance, exactly, but the way the two groupings are separated does highlight space and motion.

Also at the GWU Corcoran’s

Flagg Building is a separate show that fuses two art forms based on movement, modern dance and video. “Legacy” is a 50th-anniversary tribute to D.C. choreographer Maida Withers, who teaches at the university, and her troupe, the Dance Construction Company. Local projection and video artist Robin Bell transformed Gallery 1, which adjoins the Brady Gallery, into a Withers showcase that is immersive and literally uplifting: The performance clips flit across the ceiling and the higher sections of the walls, so the dancing bodies float above the viewer.

The emphasis is on sensation, not documentation. Some of the video snippets are projected straightforwardly, but others are distorted or overlapped. This approach may not appeal to

dance purists, but it seems to suit the spirit of Withers’s experimental work. “Legacy” is less a retrospective than a remix.

**Renewal** Through Dec. 3 at the Luther W. Brady Art Gallery, Corcoran Flagg Building, 500 17th St. NW.

**Legacy** Through Dec. 10 at Gallery 1, Corcoran Flagg Building, 500 17th St. NW.

## Stephanie Garon

Lithium may be the most-sought metal today, but the title of Stephanie Garon’s Hamiltonian Artists show refers to the best-known instance of mining mania: “Gold Rush.” In the local artist’s multimedia exhibition, drawings, photographs, sculptures and video ponder the effects of

mineral extraction on Passamaquoddy tribal land in Maine. Many of the artworks involve rock core samples, whether actual ones or representations such as the traced outlines of stone fragments in “Void,” a puzzle-like drawing.

The show’s title piece is a heap of rock spikes supported by metal crossbeams and piled beneath an electronic stock-market ticker display. Other mineral chunks are clumped in a corner or mounted in a steel frame. Visitors are invited to use a metal-detection phone app to discern traces of gold, silver and copper in the core samples.

Two abstract paintings are made of soil and crushed rock from Maine, mixed with D.C. tap water. They’re accompanied by a chant (audible through

headphones) by eclectic musician and composer Mali Obomsawin, who grew up on ancestral land in Maine and Quebec. A video links audio commentary about the effects of mining on Maine with footage of a basket bobbing in water; nearby, a small basket is on display. “Gold Rush” weaves connections among places, people and the products that sustain them, some more disruptive than others.

## Stephanie Garon: Gold Rush

Through Nov. 26 at Hamiltonian Artists, 1353 U St. NW.

## Susan Wooddell Campbell

The pictures in Susan Wooddell Campbell’s “All Over the Map” are linked not by technique, but by shape, color and theme. Nature is the principal inspiration for the D.C. artist’s Washington Printmakers Gallery show, which includes collages, prints produced by various techniques and two drawings made on a tablet computer. Often the pieces are constructed from discrete parts, such as the mesh sewn into “Netted,” the color-infused rectangular forms sliced into the mostly black-and-white “Beyond the Gate,” or the vignettes — two line drawings and one painting — that flow into the unified river view of “Kenilworth Trio.”

“I currently consider myself a painter first,” the artist notes in her statement. That explains her affinity for monotypes, which are often made by applying pigment to a matrix that is then printed to yield a single, painterly impression. Her monotypes feature soft, fluid colors and organic shapes, such as the leaflike overlapping forms of the yellow-dominated “Aspen.” Image and medium combine to conjure a vision of natural objects in profusion, arranged randomly yet harmoniously.

**Susan Wooddell Campbell: All Over the Map** Through Nov. 27 at Washington Printmakers Gallery, 1641 Wisconsin Ave. NW.

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